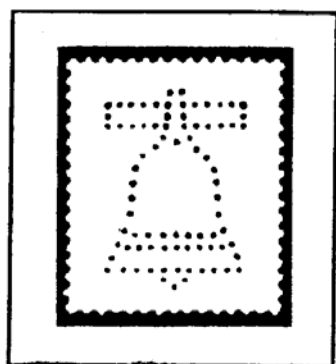


FOR WHOM THE BELL, TOLLS

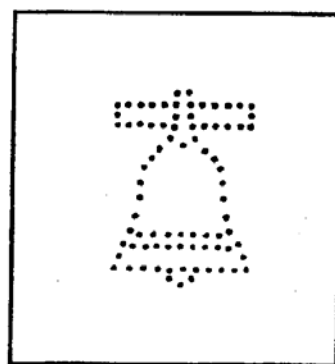
John Mathews - with help from Roy Gault and Rosemary Smith.

Recently, and not for the first time, I had been in e-discussions about the "Bell" perfin with Roy Gault who is the editor of the GB Perfin Society's New Illustrated Catalogue of Great Britain Perfins. Joseph Sloper's workbooks show two identical sample strikes of the NSW "Bell" perfin associated with machines 6200 and 6208 made by them in the early 1880s. Roy had noted that there was a difference between those strikes and the example of that pattern he had on a GB stamp, so I sent him my copy on a NSW stamp for a direct comparison.

Roy confirmed that there were slight differences between the GB and NSW versions. For example, the "shoulders" of the GB "Bell" are distinctly rounded, whereas those on the NSW version appear straight. Also, the two pins in the centre of the cross-arm are horizontal in the GB version and at a slight slope in the NSW version. The lower rim of the NSW "Bell" shows some pins out of alignment, while the GB "Bell" has a straight lower rim.



The GB "Bell"
(Des0010.01)



The NSW "Bell"
(Symbol. 1)

Neither the GB user nor the NSW user was known in 1993 when I turned my attention to this pattern, thinking that such a symbol should be easy to identify. The known postmarks were, respectively, London and

Glasgow, and Sydney. The GB pattern was known used from 1882 to 1884 (now known used until at least 1907), while the Sydney one was only used over a short period in the mid-1880s with dated copies in mid-1887 (now has a known early postmark date of December 1886). My research suggested that the Bell Organ and Piano Company might be a candidate for the user of this pattern, as it is located in both London and Sydney at the right time, and it used a "Bell" symbol as its Trade Mark which closely resembled that perfin pattern. Pursuit of this quest took me via Guelph in Canada on my to UK in 1993, Guelph being the later "headquarters" of that company and the civic museum there had an abundance of the company's material. That company was then provisionally considered to be the user in both GB and Australian perfin Catalogues.

In his latest correspondence, Roy mentioned that copies of this pattern on GB stamps in the collections of Rosemary Smith and himself both have postmarks "...AR. E" as late as 1907, and Roy's also has '11/B' in a barred oval which Roy identifies as Poplar, London E. This has sent me back to the Directories for London and Sydney. Poplar is the area immediately north of the River Thames near the present Blackwall Tunnel. One hundred years ago, apart from the dockside area, most of the commercial area was occupied by shopkeepers and small businesses, none of whom was likely to use a perforator, let alone have an office in Sydney. However, one larger business in the northern part of the Poplar district seemed a possible user - R. Bell & Co Ltd, makers of matches and wax vestas. Unfortunately, they were not listed in the Sydney directories of the mid-1880s and their entries in the Australian Trade Marks applications did not show that they used the "Bell" symbol as a Trade Mark. There was no connection of the Bell Organ and Piano Company with the Poplar area.

After searching nearly all of the larger streets in the Poplar district in the Directory, I found in the dockside area there was a warehouse for David Storer & Sons. The bell tolled! I recalled seeing the "Bell" symbol registered for this company in the Australian Trade Mark records. The London directory entries for David Storer and Sons also illustrate the "Bell" trademark, and show that their headquarters was in Glasgow in 1880, and moved to London a short time later and was located near Joseph Sloper's office.



They had a warehouse in the wharf area of Poplar in 1880 right through to 1909 and beyond, but there was no city office in 1909, so it seems that the perforator moved to the warehouse before then. The Sydney Directory of 1885 lists this company as merchants and ship owners at 163 Clarence Street "and at Glasgow". The following year, their listing is much more prominent and describes them as Oil & colour merchants and importers at the same address, and at London, Liverpool and Glasgow. The same directory entry continued until the 1892 edition, after which there is no listing for that company in Sydney. These London and Sydney entries correspond very closely to the known usage date range of the respective "Bell" perfins.

The 1909 London Directory shows "Wilkinson, Heywood and Clark Lim, proprietors" for the company. In Australia, Wilkinson, Heywood and Clark also perforated their stamps, but only in Victoria, after 1909, and using the initials of their company.